



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEFIANCE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MANUFACTURING CABLE TV DESCRAMBLERS, FILING FALSE TAX RETURN

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Defiance, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to manufacturing illegal cable TV descramblers and failing to pay income taxes on the money he earned from selling the equipment.

John A. Figura, 43, of Defiance, waived his right to a grand jury indictment and instead pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to a two-count federal information.

By pleading guilty, **Figura** admitted that he manufactured and distributed equipment for the unauthorized reception of cable television channels from January 1996 to April 1, 2000. **Figura** admitted that he manufactured approximately 500,000 of the cable TV descramblers at EMS Manufacturing in St. Charles, Mo., and other locations in the St. Louis area. **Figura** distributed many of the descramblers to **James Grant Collins**, 40, of Rocky Mount, Mo. **Collins** then sold the descramblers to individuals and businesses.

In a separate case, **Collins** previously pleaded guilty to tax fraud and to cable theft on Jan. 10, 2003, and was sentenced on May 7, 2004, to five years of probation, including six months at a halfway house and 100 hours of community service.

Figura also admitted that he filed a fraudulent tax return for 1997. The federal income tax return he filed on April 15, 1998, listed \$67,639 in taxable income. However, Graves said, the return failed to include \$247,795 in additional income **Figura** earned from the illegal manufacture and sale of the cable TV descramblers.

Figura also admitted that his tax returns contained unreported income from the illegal

activity in 1995 (\$127,277), 1996 (\$63,494), and 1998 (\$387,863). The total tax loss, Graves said, totals at least \$285,891.

Under federal statutes, **Figura** could be subject to a sentence of up to five years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$500,000 and an order of restitution. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lawrence E. Miller. It was investigated by Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigations and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow